



***Minority Business Enterprise:
Keeping America Competitive through Innovation***

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**Remarks of Ronald N. Langston, National Director
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(538 words)

- Hello, this is Ron Langston, National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC.
- Recently, I had the privilege joining SBA Administrator Steve Preston during National Small Business Week to salute the contributions of small business owners who are at the heart of our nation's vibrant U.S. economy.
- I want to reinforce the important role small, minority, and women-owned businesses play in keeping America competitive in the world-wide economy.
- Whether you agree or disagree with Thomas Friedman, that the "world is flat," I hope you do appreciate that as

a result of the conversion of the internet, telecommunications, and technology, the differential of time and space has collapsed.

- We now live in a world of real-time global enterprise, competition and communication. Like it or not, we must be vigilant about the Nation's competitiveness and our *collective will and skill* to adapt and innovate.
- Last year, President Bush launched the *American Competitiveness Initiative*, and noted
 - "...One of the great engines of our growing economy is our Nation's capacity to innovate..."
 - *We know that as other countries build their economies and become more technologically advanced, America will face a new set of challenges...*
 - *The bedrock of America's competitiveness is a well-educated and skilled workforce..."*
- The ACI report further underscored the President's message: "*Our prosperity is no accident. It is the product of risk takers, innovators and visionaries.*"

- Here at MBDA, we believe it is imperative for small and minority-owned firms to grow in ***size, scale and capacity*** as part of the *competitive viability* of the U.S. economy...C*ompetitive viability* must be the new mantra.
- Small businesses, and in particular minority business enterprises, must recognize the new reality that they have a vital and integral role to play in the 21st century world-wide economy. As businesses, you must:
 - Position your firm to access capital.
 - Understand the value and importance of education, and financial literacy.
 - Excel at running the back room of your business
 - Use technology as a *business* tool for administrative efficiencies, e-commerce, quality control and other solutions.
 - Finally, you must pursue strategic alliances with other partners to enhance and expand your business in size, scale and capacity.
- Throughout this year MBDA, U.S. Department of Commerce and this Administration will promote and

implement the President's American Competitiveness Initiative.

- I firmly believe, as the President and the Secretary of Commerce, that a pro-business, pro-growth strategy and the American Competitiveness Initiative is our best hope for a future of prosperity.
- I also believe the Nation's minority business entrepreneurs will, and frankly must play a significant part in the nation's economic future.
- The U.S., and in fact the world, needs Minority Business Enterprises' entrepreneurial heart, your competitive drive and most importantly, your innovative spirit. You are on the front lines in making the business case for the growth and expansion of small, disadvantaged and women-owned businesses. I hope you will join me and others in articulating the business case for *competitive viability and strategic growth*.
- On behalf of Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez and President George W. Bush Thank you.